

## A WOMAN'S VOW.

## A LAWYER'S STORY.

## CONCLUDED.

EVERY professional man will understand me when I say I was glad to hear this. Hitherto the girl's whim and the murder appeared to be two events connected only by the accident of occurrence on the same day. Now there was but one mystery to solve.

Whatever success I have had in my practice has been due to my habit of basing my theories upon the known character of the parties implicated, and not upon more palpable accidental circumstances. Left to myself now, I speedily resolved this case into a few suppositions, positive to me as facts. The girl had been present at the murder. She was not naturally reticent; was instead an exceptionally confiding, credulous woman. Her motive for silence, therefore, must have been a force brought to bear on her at the time of the murder stronger than her love for Merrick, and which was still existing and active. Her refusal to meet her lover I readily interpreted to be a fear of her own weakness—dread lest she should betray this secret to him. Might not her refusal to marry him be caused by the same fear? some crushing disgrace or misery which threatened her through the murder, and which she feared to bring upon her husband? The motive I had guessed to be strong as her love; what if it were her love? Having stepped from surmise to surmise so far, I paused to strengthen my position by the facts. There were but two ways in which this murder could have prevented her marriage—through Merrick's guilt or her own. His innocence was proven; hers I did not doubt after I had again carefully studied her face. Concealed guilt leaves its secret signature upon the mouth and eye in lines never to be mistaken by a man who has once learned to read them.

Were there but these two ways? There was a third, more probable than either—fear. At the first presentation of this key to the riddle the whole case mapped itself out before me. The murderer had sealed her lips by some threat. He was still living, and she was in daily expectation of meeting him. She had never seen his face, but had reason to believe him of her own class, (this supposition I based on her quick, terrified inspection of every man's face who approached her.) Now what threat could have been strong enough to keep a weak girl silent for years, and to separate her from her lover on their wedding day? I knew women well enough to say, none against herself; the threat I believed hung over Merrick's head, and would be fulfilled if she betrayed the secret, or married him, which, with a weak, loving woman, was equivalent, as any man would know, to betrayal.

I cannot attempt to make the breaks in this reasoning solid ground for my readers; it was solid ground for me.

The next morning Bearsley met me on leaving the breakfast table. He held an open letter in his hand, and looked annoyed and anxious.

"Here's a note from Merrick. He sailed a week sooner than he expected—has left New York, and will be here to-night. If I had only put the case into your hands earlier! I had a hope that you could clear the little girl. But it's too late. She'll take flight as soon as she hears he is coming. Scheffer says it's a miserable, bloody muddle, and that I was not to stir it up."

"I do not agree with Dr. Scheffer," I said quietly. "I am going now to the library. In half an hour send Miss Waring to me."

"You have not yet been presented to her?"

"So much the better. I wish her to regard me as a lawyer simply. State to her as formally as you choose who I am, and that I desire to see her on business."

I seated myself in the library; placed pen and ink, and some legal-looking documents, selected at random, before me. Red tape and the formal pomp of law constitute half its force with women and men of Louisiana's calibre. I had hardly arranged myself and my materials when the door slowly opened, and she entered. She was alarmed, yet wary. To see a naturally hearty, merry little body subjected for years to this nervous strain, with a tragic idea forced into a brain meant to be busied only with dress, cookery or babies, appeared to me a pitiful thing.

"Miss Waring?" reducing the ordinary courtesies to a curt, grave nod. "Be seated, if you please." I turned over my papers slowly, and then looked up at her. I had, I saw none of the common, feminine shrewdness to deal with; need expect no subtle devices of concealment; no clever doublings; nothing but sheer obstinacy, which is an intellectual woman's one resource. I would ignore it and her—boldly assume full possession of the ground at the first word.

"My errand to this house, Miss Waring

is in part the investigation of a murder in 1854, of which you were the sole witness—that of Houston Simms."

I stopped. The change in her face appalled me. She had evidently not expected so direct an attack. In fact, Bearsley told me afterward that it was the first time the subject had been broached to her in plain words. However, she made no reply, and I proceeded in the same formal tone:

"I shall place before you the facts which are in my possession, and require your assent to such as are within your knowledge. On the afternoon of Tuesday, October 5, 1854, Houston Simms left the Pine Valley station, carrying a valise containing a large sum of money. You—"

She had been sitting on the other side of the table, looking steadily at me. She rose now. She wore a blue morning dress, with lace ruffles and other little foibles in which women delight, and I remember being shocked with the strange contrast between this frippery and the speechless dread and misery of her face. She gained control of her voice with difficulty.

"Who has said that I was a witness of the murder?" she gasped. "I always explained that I was in another part of the wood. I went to aunt Huldah—"

"Pray do not interrupt me, Miss Waring. I am aware that you were the witness—the sole witness—in this matter." (She did not contradict me. I was right in my first guess—she had been alone with the murderer.) "On returning from your nurse's cabin you left the direct path and followed the sound of angry voices to the gorge by Mill's Spring—"

"I did not go to play the spy. Helled when he said that," she cried feebly. "I heard the steps, and thought Colonel Merrick had come to search for me."

"That matters nothing. You saw the deed done. The old man was killed, and then robbed, in your sight"—I came toward her, and lowered my voice to a stern, judicial whisper, while the poor girl shrank back as though I were law itself uttering judgment upon her. If she had known what stagey guess-work it all was! "When you were discovered the murderer would have shot you to insure your silence."

"I wish he had. It was Thad who would have done that. The white man's way was more cruel—oh, God knows it was more cruel!"

(There were two then.) I was very sorry for the girl, but I had a keen pleasure in the slow unfolding of the secret, just as I suppose the physician takes delight in the study of a new disease, even if it kills the patient.

"Yes," I said with emphasis. "I believe that it would have been less suffering for you, Miss Waring, to have died then than to have lived, forced as you were to renounce your lover, and to carry about with you the dread of the threat made by those men."

"I have not said there was a threat made. I have betrayed nothing," she had seated herself some time before by the table. There was a large bronze inkstand before her, and as she listened she arranged a half dozen pens evenly on the rest. The words she heard and spoke mattered more to her than life or death; her features were livid as those of a corpse, yet her hands went on with their mechanical work—one pen did not project a hair's breadth beyond the other. We lawyers know how common such puerile, commonplace actions are in the supreme moments of life, and how seldom men wring their hands, or use tragic gestures or indeed words.

"No, you have betrayed nothing," I said calmly. "Your self-control has been remarkable, even when we remember that you believed your confession would be followed by speedy vengeance, not on your head, but Colonel Merrick's."

She looked up not able to speak for a minute. "You—you know all?"

"Not all, but enough to assure you that your time of suffering is over. You can speak freely, unharmed."

Her head dropped on the table. She was crying, and, I think, praying.

"You saw Houston Simms killed by two men, one of whom, the negro Thad you knew. The white man's face was covered. You did not recognize him. But he knew you, and the surest way to compel you to silence. I wish you now to state to me all the details of this man's appearance, voice and manner, to show me any letters which you have received from him since" (a random guess, which I saw hit the mark)—"in short, every circumstance which you can recall about him."

She made no reply.

"My dear Miss Waring, you need have no fear on Colonel Merrick's account. The law has taken this matter out of your hands. Colonel Merrick is protected by the law."

"O! I did not understand," meekly.

To be brief, she told me the whole story. When she reached the spring she had found the old man bleeding and still breathing. He died in her arms.

The men, who had gone back into the laurel to open the valise, came back upon her. The negro was a desperate character, well known in the county. He had died two years later. The other man was masked and thoroughly disguised. He had stopped the negro when he would have killed her, and after a few minutes' consultation had whispered to him the terms upon which she was allowed to escape.

"You did not hear the white man's voice?"

"Not once."

"Bring me the letters you have received from him."

She brought two miserably spelled and written scrawls on soiled bits of paper. It was the writing of an educated man, poorly disguised. He threatened to meet her speedily, warned her that he had spies constantly about her.

"That is all the evidence you can give me?"

"All." She rose to go. I held the door open for her, when she hesitated.

"There was something more—a mere trifle."

"Yes. But most likely the very thing that I want."

"I returned to the spring again and again for months afterward. People thought I was mad. I may have been; but I found there one day a bit of reddish glass with a curious mark on it."

"You have it here?"

She brought it to me. It was a fragment of engraved sardonyx, apparently part of a seal; the upper part of the head was cut upon it; the short hairs curving forward on the low forehead showed that the head was that of Hercules.

Some old recollection rose in my brain beginning, as I may say, to gnaw uncertainly. I went to my room for a few minutes to collect myself, and then sought Bearsley.

He was pacing up and down the walk to the stables, agitated as though he had been the murderer.

"Well, Floyd, well! What chance is there? What have you discovered?"

"Everything. One moment. I have a question or two to ask you. About ten years ago you commissioned me to buy for you in New York a seal—an intaglio of great value—a head of Hercules, as I remember. What did you do with it?"

"Gave it to Job Scheffer, William's father. Will has it now, though I think it is broken."

"Very well. What have Dr. Scheffer's habits been lately, by the way? Was he as fond of turning the cards as the other young fellows?"

"Oh, yes, poor boy! There was a rumor some years ago that he was frightfully involved in Baltimore—that it would ruin the old man, in fact, to clear off his debts of honor. But it died out. I suppose William found some way of straightening them out."

"Probably. Where is Dr. Scheffer now? I have a message for him."

"In his room. But this matter of Louisa Waring—"

"Presently. Have patience."

I went up to the young man's room. After all, the poor wretch was dying, and to compel him to blast his own honorable name seemed but brutal cruelty. I had to remember the poor girl's wasted face and hopeless eyes before I could summon courage to open the door after I had knocked. I think he expected me, and knew all I had to say. A man in health would soon have known that I was acting on surmise, and defied me to the proof. Scheffer, I fancied, had been creeping through life for years with death in two shapes pursuing him, step by step. He yielded, cowed submissive at the first touch, and only pleaded feebly for mercy.

The negro had been his body servant—knew his desperate straits, and dragged him into the crime. Then, he had loved Louisa; he was maddened by her approaching marriage. The scheme of ensuring her silence and driving Merrick away was the inspiration of a moment, and had succeeded. He only asked for mercy. His time was short. He could not live beyond a few weeks. I would not bring him to the gallows.

I was merciful, and I think was right to be so. His deposition was taken before his uncle, who was a magistrate, and two other men of position and weight in the community. It was to be kept secret until after his death, and then made public. He was removed at once to his father's house.

On Colonel Merrick's arrival that evening, this deposition was formally read to him. I do not think it impressed him very much. He was resolved to marry Miss Waring in spite of every obstacle.

"But I never would have married you unless the truth had been discovered—never," she said to him that evening as they stood near me in the drawing-room. Her cheeks were warm, and her dark eyes full of tender light. I thought her a very lovely woman.

"Then I owe you to Mr. Floyd after all?" he said, looking down at her fondly.

"O, I suppose so," with a shrug.

"But he is a very disagreeable person! Cast-iron, you know. I am so thankful you are not a lawyer, Paul, as my vow not to marry you is cancelled."

## What Men Need Wives For.

It is not to sweep the house, and make the bed, and darn the socks, and cook the meals chiefly that a man wants a wife. If this is all he needs, hired help can do it cheaper than a wife. If this is all, when a young man calls to see a young lady, send him in the pantry to taste the bread and cakes she has made; send him to inspect the needle work and bed-making, or put a broom into her hands and send him to witness its use. Such things are important, and the wise young man will quietly look after them. But what a true man most wants of a true wife is her companionship, sympathy, courage and love. The way of life has many dreary places in it, and man needs a companion to go with him. A man is sometimes overtaken with misfortune; he meets with failure and defeat; trials and temptations beset him, and he needs one to stand by and sympathize. He has some stern battles to fight with poverty, with enemies and with sin; and he needs a woman that, while he puts his arms around her and feels that he has something to fight for, will help him fight; that will put her lips to his ears and whisper words of council, and her hands to his heart and impart new inspiration. All through storm and through sunshine, conflict and victory, through adverse favoring winds, man needs a woman's love. The heart yearns for it. A sister's or a mother's love will hardly supply the need.

## Breaking Down.

Men who often have their hands full, are over-crowded with business and drive hurriedly along at it, but they may not be overworked. We cannot always tell when we are overworked. A man does not always know himself no more than he knows the strain on the mainspring of his watch what will break it. But there comes a time when the watch stops. Men break down in this way. They go on, day after day, the pressure bearing harder each successive day, until the vital force gives out, and the machine stops. It is a great pity that the indications of this state of thing cannot be seen beforehand, and if seen regarded. It is one of the last things that men will admit to themselves, much less to others. They flatter themselves it is only a little weariness of the flesh which will pass off with a few hours' rest when, in fact, every nerve power and resource are exhausted, and the system is driven to work by sheer force of the will. When the oil on the shaft or in the oil box is exhausted, every revolution of the wheel wears on the revolving part, and soon will ruin it. The same is true of the human body.

## Physicians Puzzled.

The very remarkable case of Hattie Brown, whose physician believes that she has a living reptile preying upon her vitals, has attracted the attention of the medical faculty. Dr. J. H. Demarest visited his patient yesterday to make an examination with the stethoscope, his purpose to ascertain how far a decay of the lungs might contribute to the audible sounds that Miss Brown insists are from a living creature that is growing and killing her. But she had eaten a very hearty breakfast, which, in her emaciated condition, distended her stomach, and the examination was not entirely satisfactory.

Dr. Demarest said, last evening, that he had no reason to change his opinion. "It is certainly not a case of hysteria," he said, "because it has been continuously in the mind of the patient for several years that some living object was within her, whereas all cases of hysteria are variable in their attacks. I still believe that some species of reptile has grown within her and produces the sensations which she so accurately describes. As soon as she is in a proper physical condition a further examination will, I believe, resolve this doubt into a certainty."—N. Y. Herald.

The beautiful hymn, "I would not live always, I ask not to stay," most persons would suppose was written by a person of slender vitality, whose hold on life was so tenuous that it parted early and left the mournful singer to sink into a premature grave; but not so. Rev. Dr. Muhlenberg, the author, still lives—though upward of eighty years of age—though now probably on his death-bed. He is also the author of that inspiring Christmas hymn, "Shout the glad tidings." Two such hymns are enough to insure a hope of a blessed immortality.

The English institution of game preserves has been introduced into Berks county by a local sportsmen's association. They have leased 3000 acres of forest, field and stream, which they will stock with birds and fishes. They pay each of the fifteen farmers who own the land five dollars a year and divide the proceeds of fines, for "poaching" with the farmers on whose territory game is killed.

## DR. SCHENCK'S STANDARD REMEDIES

The standard remedies for all diseases of the lungs are Schenck's Pulmonic Syrup, Schenck's Sea Weed Tonic, and Schenck's Mandrake Pills, and if taken before the lungs are destroyed, a speedy cure is effected.

To these three medicines Dr. J. H. Schenck, of Philadelphia, owes his unrivalled success in the treatment of pulmonary diseases.

The Pulmonic Syrup ripens the morbid matter in the lungs, nature throws it off by an easy expectoration, for when the phlegm or matter is ripe a slight cough will throw it off, the patient has rest and the lungs begin to heal.

To enable the pulmonic syrup to do this, Dr. Schenck's Mandrake Pills and Schenck's Sea Weed Tonic must be freely used to cleanse the stomach and liver. Schenck's Mandrake Pills act on the liver, removing all obstructions, relax the gall bladder, the bile starts freely, and the liver is soon relieved.

Schenck's Sea Weed Tonic is a gentle stimulant and alterative; the alkali of which it is composed mixes with the food and prevents souring. It assists the digestion by toning up the stomach to a healthy condition, so that the food and the Pulmonic Syrup will make good blood; then the lungs heal, and the patient will surely get well if care is taken to prevent fresh cold.

All who wish to cure Schenck, either personally or by letter, can do so at his principal office, corner of Sixth and Arch Sts., Philadelphia, every Monday.

Schenck's medicines are sold by all druggists throughout the country. [mch & apr.

## VEGETINE

VEGETINE has never failed to effect a cure, giving tone and strength to the system debilitated by disease.

## SIR R. HESTS WILL.

South Poland, Me., Oct. 11, 1876.

Mr. H. R. Stevens—Dear Sir—have been sick two years with the liver complaint, and during that time have taken a great many different medicines, but none of them did me any good. I was restless nights and had no appetite. Since taking the Vegetine I rest well and relish my food. Can recommend the Vegetine for what it has done for me. Yours respectfully,

W. H. ALBERT RICKER.

Witness of the above.

Mr. Geo. M. Vaughn, Medford, Mass.

## VEGETINE.

Thousands will bear testimony (and do it voluntarily) that Vegetine is the best medical compound yet placed before the public for renovating and purifying the blood, eradicating all humors, impurities or poisonous secretions from the system, invigorating and strengthening the system debilitated by disease; in fact, it is as many have called it, "The Great Health Restorer."

## Safe and Sure.

Mr. H. R. Stevens—In 1872 your Vegetine was recommended to me, and yielding to the suggestions of a friend, I consented to try it. At the time, I was suffering from general debility and nervous prostrations, superinduced by overwork and irregular habits of life. I felt that strengthening and curative powers seemed to affect my debilitated system from the first dose, and under its persistent use I rapidly recovered, gaining more than usual health and good feeling. Since then I have not hesitated to give Vegetine my most unqualified indorsement as being a safe, sure and powerful agent in promoting health and restoring the wasted system to new life and energy—Vegetine is the only medicine I have used, and as long as I live I never expect to find a better.

Yours truly,

W. H. CLARK.

120 Monterey Street, Allegheny, Pa.

## VEGETINE.

VEGETINE thoroughly eradicates every kind of humor, and restores the entire system to a healthy condition.

The following letter from Rev. G. W. Mansfield, formerly pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Hyde Park, and at present settled in Lowell, must convince every one who reads this letter of the wonderful curative powers of Vegetine as a thorough cleanser and purifier of the blood:

Hyde Park, Mass., Feb. 15, 1876.

Mr. H. R. Stevens—Dear Sir—About ten years ago my health failed through the depressing effects of dyspepsia; nearly a year later I was attacked by typhoid fever in its worst form, it settled in my back and took the form of a large deep-seated abscess, which was fifteen months in gathering. I had two surgical operations, by the best skill in the state but received no permanent cure. I suffered great pain at times and was constantly weakened by a profuse discharge. I also lost small pieces of bone at different times.

Matters ran on thus about seven years, till May 1874, when a friend recommended me to go to your office and talk with you of the virtue of Vegetine. I did so, and by your kindness passed through your manipulations, noting the ingredients etc., by which your remedy is produced.

By what I saw and heard I gained some confidence in Vegetine.

I commenced taking it soon after, but felt worse from its effects; still I persevered and soon felt it was benefiting me in other respects. Yet I did not see the results I desired, till I had taken it faithfully for a little more than a year, when the difficulty in the back was cured, and in nine months I have enjoyed the best of health.

I have in that time gained twenty-five pounds of flesh, being heavier than ever before in my life, and I was never more able to perform labor than now.

During the past few weeks I had a serious swelling as large as my fist gather on another part of my body.

I took Vegetine faithfully and it removed it level with the surface in a month. I think I should have been cured of my main trouble sooner if I had taken larger doses, after having become accustomed to its effects.

Let your patients troubled with scrofula or kidney disease, understand that it takes time to cure chronic diseases, and if they will patiently take Vegetine, it will, in my judgment, cure them. With great obligations to you,

Yours very truly,

G. W. MANSFIELD,

Pastor of the M. E. Church.

14—[m]

Prepared by H. R. Stevens, Boston, Mass.

Vegetine is sold by All Druggists.

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NOTICE—The public are hereby notified and warned not to molest, or in any way trespass on the rights and credits of Anthony Sughart in the following property purchased by him at Sheriff's sale, at the residence of Levi Sughart, on the 7th day of February, 1877, said property being left in the care of Levi Sughart, viz:

Two Cows, 4 head of Young Cattle, 1 Mower combined, 1 two horse Wagon, 1 Metal Flow Double and Single Trees, 1 Grain Cradle, Lot of Cow Chains, 1 pair of Breast chains, 1 pair of Butt chains, 1 Hay Rake, 1 Corn Coverer, and 1 Spreader.

ANTHONY SUGHART,

Per Levi SUGHART, Agent.

Blain, Pa., February 13, 1877.

ESTATE NOTICE—Notice is hereby given that Letters Testamentary on the estate of Frederick E. Dum, late of Tyrone township, Perry county, Pa., deceased, have been granted to the undersigned, residing in Elliottsburg, Perry county, Pa.